

United States District Court
Northern District of Indiana

Robert L. Miller, Jr.
Chief Judge

204 South Main Street
South Bend, Indiana
46601

June 7, 2006

Members of the Bar:

Technology and more uniform use of magistrate judges have permitted the court to change its case assignment method to achieve a more efficient utilization of its complement of active and senior district judges and so expedite the handling of cases and provide more efficient service to the public.

With limited exceptions, each case will be assigned to a local magistrate judge — a magistrate judge assigned to the division in which the case is filed — upon filing. Unless the assigned district judge orders otherwise in a particular case, that magistrate judge will handle all matters other than trials, final pretrial conferences, and motions for rulings that would bring the case to a close.

At filing, the case also will be assigned to a district judge, without regard to division. That district judge will handle trials and dispositive motions. The district judge to whom the case is assigned will determine the location for trial. The parties may request that videoconferencing be used for any hearing before a judge not located in the division in which the case was filed.

Procedures for consents to magistrate judges will remain unchanged.

The changes will take effect on July 1, 2006.

Sincerely,

Robert L. Miller, Jr.
Chief Judge, United States District Court